

16 May 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Counsel

SUBJECT: Authority for Award of the Medal of Freedom

1. This will confirm a recent discussion with [REDACTED] concerning the desirability of delegating to the Director authority to award the Medal of Freedom. The Honor Awards Board has suggested that this authority be delegated to the Director on several occasions in the past, but agreed with your office that, before recommending additional steps, one or two test cases involving recommendations for the Medal of Freedom would be presented to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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2. On 10 September 1954, two cases were transmitted to OSD and were followed rather closely during the time they were in process there. Both were approved by Mr. Wilson, Secretary of Defense, and sent by him to the Director on 6 December 1954. In the routine calls that were made to follow the progress of these recommendations, it became evident that they had been handled by a rather large number of people and were in fact brought to Mr. Wilson's personal attention. While we do not believe any security lapse occurred, we do believe that the routing followed by the OSD, which includes presentation to the Army's Decorations Board, brings an unnecessarily large number of individuals into the scene, and consumes more processing time than is ideal.

3. The Honor Awards Board will appreciate your reconsideration of the matter of delegation of authority to award the Medal of Freedom with a view toward securing an amendment to Executive Order 10336 so that the Director will be included among those who are authorized to award the Medal of Freedom.

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[REDACTED]
Chairman, CIA Honor Awards Board